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SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR INR/B

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MFA STATE SECRETARY UNDERSCORES MISTRUST IN
MACEDONIAN SYSTEM

Classified By: Ambassador Reeker for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

Summary

[11](#). (C) New MFA State Secretary (#3 in the Ministry) Memedi openly admitted to us Dec. 4 that he shamed or coerced his way into his new position. He was unconcerned about being out of the loop on policy, preferring to concentrate on his own projects in MFA, chief among them building a cadre of ethnic Albanian diplomats and ensuring money from, the Middle East does not reach any radical Islamists in Macedonia. Memedi believes only a "federal" system of government where e-Albanian consent would be required on all major policy decisions is the way to avoid ethnic confrontation in the future. Memedi's disarming -- or alarming -- candor illustrates the evident distrust in this society and even within the government. End summary.

Fill in Application, Send in Resume, Intimidate the Minister...

[12](#). (C) P/E Chief hosted new MFA State Secretary Abdulkadir Memedi to a one-on-one lunch on Dec. 4. Given the occasion, we were surprised when Memedi almost immediately launched into a bitterly candid recounting of his relationship with FonMin Milososki and how Memedi obtained his position. Memedi is a career diplomat who says he does not belong to a political party, but he is close to DUI (Macedonia's largest e-Albanian party) Leader Ali Ahmeti and others in the party. (Typically for this politicized system, the State Secretary is a career diplomat but is normally chosen from the ranks of one of the coalition parties.)

[13](#). (C) Memedi related that MFA had assigned him to open the Macedonian embassy in the UAE in 2005 and then to serve there as Charge. He returned home for leave at the end of 2006 and learned -- from the press -- that the Ministry had recalled him from duty. The press accounts at the time accused him of dereliction of duty and misuse of funds. Memedi then learned from a journalist friend that the source of the information was FonMin Milososki himself. (Press reports at the time also quoted sources from President Crvenkovski's cabinet accusing Memedi of refusing to process the agreement request for Macedonia's first ambassador to UAE, instead angling for the job himself.) Memedi then enlisted colleagues from MFA who promised to provide proof if needed that the charges were false, then -- he claims -- confronted Milososki directly. According to Memedi's account, an embarrassed and intimidated Milososki not only canceled his recall but offered Memedi any spot in the Ministry he wanted. Memedi chose State Secretary, and was appointed (after some delay) in Oct 2008.

Out of the Loop, But Just as Glad

¶4. (C) Not surprisingly, Memedi describes his relationship with Milososki as "proper," but added that "we are getting used to each other." He admitted, without apparent concern, that he is not part of the senior foreign policy decision-making apparatus. He said his job is to run the ministry, but added that for his own protection (i.e., against corruption charges) he will not sign documents committing state funding. Memedi claimed that MFA's budget had increased under VMRO's leadership (i.e., from 2006) from 13 million Euro to 42 million, strongly implying that some in the Ministry -- perhaps previous State Secretary Igor Ilievski -- had managed to skim off the top of this funding bulge, probably with the purchase of a number of new embassies around the world.

¶5. (C) Memedi said his main priority was to bring a cadre of 15-20 capable e-Albanians into the diplomatic corps and to ensure they rise to senior positions as quickly as possible. Beyond that, "I will not do any more as State Secretary than the law requires." Memedi later added that -- apparently chiefly in an effort to defuse DUI rival DPA's charges that DUI is infiltrated by Islamist fundamentalists -- he will use his position to persuade Middle Eastern nations not to permit further funding for "certain NGOs" here. Memedi told us that he has extensive experience in the Middle East and speaks Arabic.

¶6. (C) Memedi reported that PM Gruevski's (and Milososki's) ruling VMRO party did not inform DUI of its decision to file legal proceedings against Greece in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) until 48 hours before the fact. He only

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learned of it from a friend in MFA's legal department. He blasted the decision (as have most e-Albanians to us), suggesting that VMRO has no intention of solving the name issue and that the GoM only filed the case to score points in the upcoming March municipal and presidential elections.

The Way Forward for Interethnic Harmony

¶7. (C) Memedi offered that the only long-term solution to Macedonia's simmering inter-ethnic tensions is the creation of a "federal state," where e-Macedonian and e-Albanian areas enjoy significantly greater autonomy from the central state institutions and where all decisions require consensus between the two main communities. Under such an arrangement, he continued, ministries would be headed by a minister, but they would also have a state minister from the other major ethnic group. Policy decisions would require the signature of both. Under such a scenario, major initiatives such as the ICJ filing would require the consent of both the e-Macedonian and e-Albanian leadership.

Mijalkov for President?

¶8. (C) Memedi cheerfully engaged in political gossip, reporting an increasingly tense relationship between Gruevski and Milososki, including Gruevski insulting his foreign minister at government meetings. He also has heard "from knowledgeable people" that VMRO is considering running internal security chief (and Gruevski cousin) Sasho Mijalkov for President next March. Memedi believes Mijalkov would win, and that VMRO would enjoy an overwhelming and unprecedented (and frightening) grip on power.

We're All for Candor, But Wow

¶9. (C) Memedi's disarming candor in what was essentially an introductory meeting borders on shocking. He made no pretense of showing loyalty to his minister or his own institution, the MFA. This instance helps to illustrate the

deep ethnic and political divides in Macedonia.
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